

INTRODUCTION

This Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was prepared by Mindigo & Associates for the City of Santa Clara (Lead Agency) under the supervision of the Planning staff to conform to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), adopted Guidelines thereto, and the City of Santa Clara requirements for the preparation of Environmental Impact Reports.

The report covers Santa Clara Square LLC's Planned Development rezoning application to allow the construction of a mixed use development of up to 490 residential units, up to 12,300 square feet of office space and up to 171,000 square feet of commercial/retail space on approximately 12.6 acres on the southwesterly quadrant of El Camino Real and Lawrence Expressway. The 171,000 square feet of commercial/retail space includes 141,711 square feet of commercial/retail space that is currently on the site.

The City of Santa Clara, as Lead Agency, is expected to use this EIR in its decision making process for the discretionary approvals.

An Environmental Impact Report is an informational document which, when fully prepared in accordance with the CEQA and State CEQA Guidelines, will inform public decision makers and the general public of the environmental effects of projects they propose to carry out or approve. The EIR process is intended to enable public agencies to evaluate a project to determine whether it may have a significant effect on the environment, to examine and institute methods of reducing adverse impact, and to consider alternatives to the project as proposed. These things must be done prior to approval of the project. While CEQA requires that major consideration be given to preventing environmental damage, it is recognized that public agencies have obligations to balance other public objectives, including economic and social factors, in determining whether and how a project should be approved.

As defined in the State CEQA Guidelines, the standards for adequacy of an EIR are that it should be prepared with a sufficient degree of analysis to provide decision-makers with information that enables them to make a decision that intelligently takes into account environmental consequences. An evaluation of the environmental effects of a proposed project need not be exhaustive, but the sufficiency of an EIR is to be reviewed in light of what is reasonably feasible. Disagreement among experts does not make an EIR inadequate, but the EIR should summarize the main points of disagreement. The courts have not looked for perfection, but for adequacy, completeness, and a good-faith effort at full disclosure.